

No Child Left Behind

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Action Guide for Parents and Communities

PUBLIC
EDUCATION
NETWORK

Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

NCLB Sections 1111 and 1116

Regulations Section 200.13 through 200.20

What is AYP?

AYP is the key measure in determining whether a public school or school district is making “annual progress” towards the academic goals established by each state. Each state is responsible for setting goals that call for “continuous and substantial improvement” of each public school district and public school, with the ultimate outcome that all students must meet the state’s standards for proficiency in language arts and math by the year 2014.

AYP is based on four main pillars:

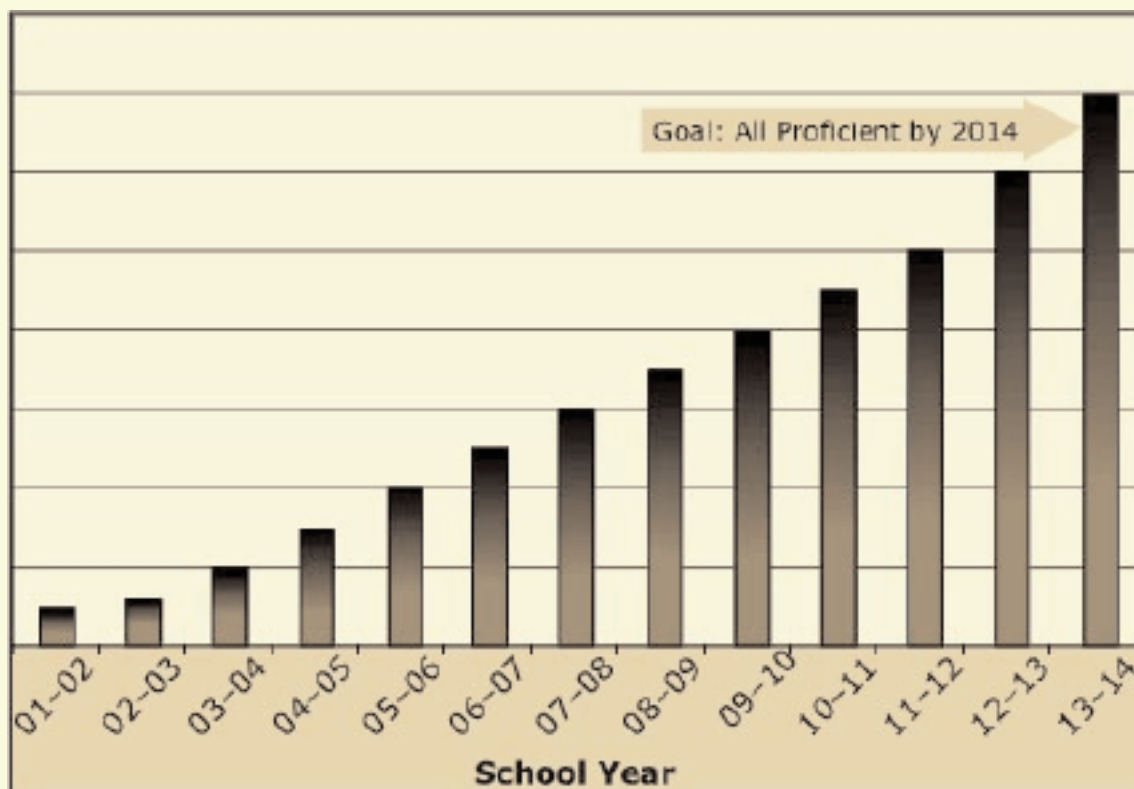
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graph TD; 1[1. The development of state content and achievement standards, aligned with;] --> 2[2. States assessments each year in grades 3-8 and once in high school in reading/language arts and math. These assessments are administered to at least 95% of the eligible students to determine if students are reaching the standards, aligned with;]; 2 --> 3[3. Assessment data disseminated widely to parents and the community on an annual basis to inform them about the progress their public schools are making; and aligned with;]; 3 --> 4[4. A means to hold school districts and schools accountable for meeting AYP goals such as rewards and sanctions.];
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1. The development of state content and achievement standards, aligned with;
  2. States assessments each year in grades 3-8 and once in high school in reading/language arts and math. These assessments are administered to at least 95% of the eligible students to determine if students are reaching the standards, aligned with;
  3. Assessment data disseminated widely to parents and the community on an annual basis to inform them about the progress their public schools are making; and aligned with;
  4. A means to hold school districts and schools accountable for meeting AYP goals such as rewards and sanctions.

## Did you know?

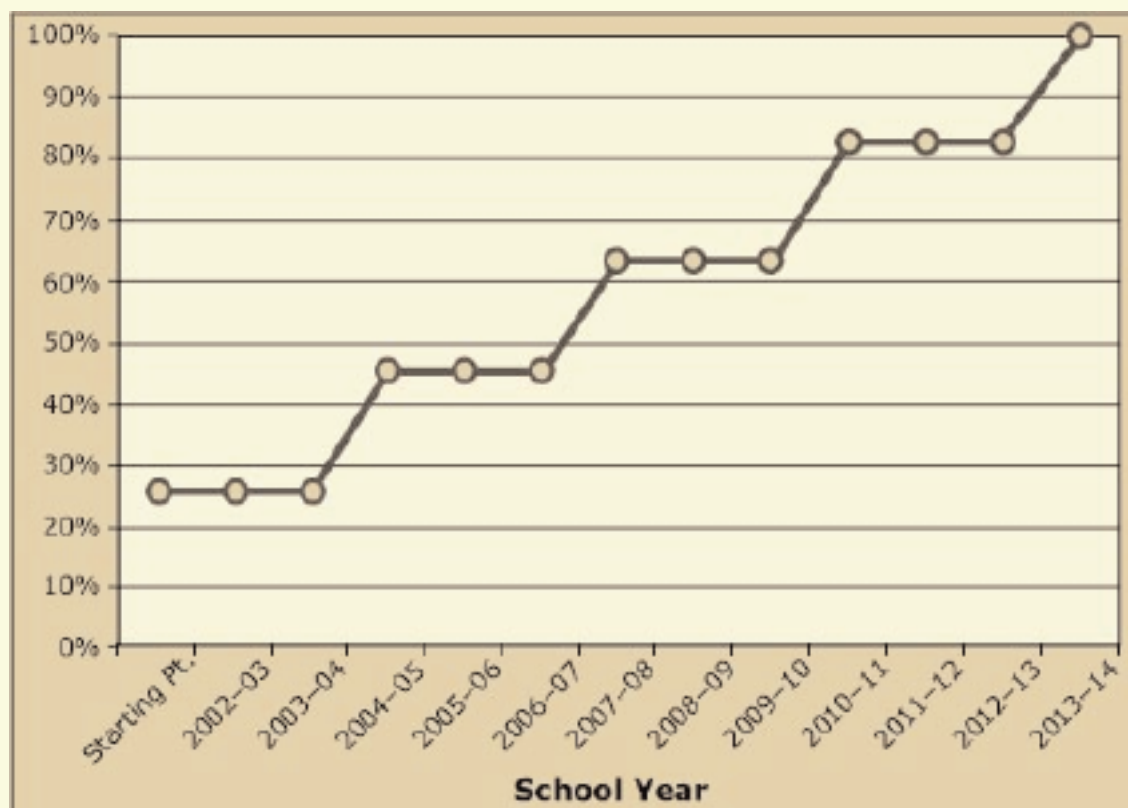
- Adequate Yearly progress (AYP) is a tool that is required by NCLB to determine which school districts and schools are making adequate academic progress, and which schools will be identified as needing improvement, corrective action or restructuring because they are not making the required progress.
- All states that accept Title I funding (currently every state) must establish AYP goals for every public school district and school in the state.
- Every state is required to assess, and report on, the AYP performance of every school in the state, even for those schools and school districts that do not qualify as Title I entities.
- Sanctions will be applied for those Title I schools that fail to make AYP. Sanctions do not apply to non-Title I schools.

## What is the Process for Establishing AYP?

- Each state must develop a single accountability system based on the state's assessment system required of all public schools in the state.
- Each state must establish a "starting point" that is based on performance of its lowest-achieving demographic group or of the lowest achieving schools in the state, whichever is higher.
- The state then sets the bar—or level of student achievement—that a school must attain after two years in order to continue to show AYP. In theory, a state's expected progress in reading/language arts and math could look like this:



- Or a state could establish AYP goals based on stair steps rather than equal steps as evidenced by the following chart:



## What is Disaggregation of Test Scores?

Each school district and school must report their AYP on student bodies as a whole, but also by four different subgroups:

- Economically disadvantaged;
- Special education;
- Limited English Proficient students (also known as ELL---English Language Learners); and
- Students from major racial/ethnic groups.

Each subgroup **MUST** meet the AYP expectations set by the state, and each subgroup must have at least 95% of its students tested. ANY subgroup that does not meet AYP, or does not meet the assessment participation rate of 95% is determined NOT to meet AYP. Each state can determine how large a subgroup must be to be reported for AYP purposes. The law states that disaggregated data “shall not be required in a case in which the number of students in a category is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or results would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.” Currently, states vary from counting subgroups as small as 5 to as large as 50 before they count the group for AYP purposes.

## **Are Test Scores the ONLY Indicators that a School Can Use in Meeting AYP?**

No. In addition to test scores, state AYP accountability systems must incorporate graduation rates for public secondary school students and “at least one other academic indicator” for public elementary school students. States may also include more additional indicators at their discretion, such as additional state or local assessments, decreases in retention rates, and/or changes in the percentages of students completing gifted and talented programs, advanced placement, and/or college preparatory courses. The rate of parental involvement could also be included as one of the indicators. If a school fails to meet their goals as established by these additional school indicators, it could be identified as not meeting AYP.

## **What must a School District or School Do to Make AYP?**

Districts and individual schools make AYP by meeting the state’s goals for each year. That means each subgroup in the school or district must meet the state goal for the percentage of students scoring at or above “proficient,” as well as the school or district as a whole. However, if any subgroup(s) falls below AYP, the school may use the safe harbor formula to escape not meeting AYP if they can show that a subgroup(s) not meeting the AYP goals decreased by 10 percent, AND made progress on one of the additional state indicators. Schools are only accountable for the academic success of students who have enrolled in the school for at least one full academic year. However, these students must be part of the school district accountability data. To account for fluctuations in test scores, schools can average tests scores for up to three years and can combine student achievement data from multiple grades.

In addition, 95% of the students in each group must be assessed, as well as 95% of the students in each school and district taken as a whole. Children with disabilities who take an alternative assessment must be included in the 95% standard. In the case of a subgroup that is deemed to be too small to produce statistically reliable results, the school would not be identified as failing to make AYP if 95% of the students in the subgroup do not take the assessment. For example, if a state determined that any sub-group size below 40 would not provide reliable results—meaning that a valid conclusion about the performance of that subgroup could not be reached with a smaller sub-group size—a school could NOT be identified as not meeting AYP if it did not meet the 95% participation requirement. However, if at least 95% of a sub-group higher than the state requirement—say hypothetically above 40—a school could be identified as low performing because the subgroup fell below the 95% threshold.

School districts, as well as schools, are required to meet the AYP requirements. If the district assessment scores as a whole (as well as subgroups in the district) fall below the state AYP expectations, the district would be identified as not meeting AYP.

## **What if a School or School District Does NOT Meet the AYP requirements?**

NCLB requires a set of consequences for Title I schools and districts that do not meet AYP. For the first year, the school must notify parents that the school or district has not met AYP. If a school does not meet AYP for two consecutive years, it is identified as needing improvement. At that point, the law triggers a set of progressively harsher sanctions on schools that do not improve.

Non Title I schools or districts are NOT required to apply the same sanctions as do Title I schools as indicated above. However, as part of the NCLB application, the state must develop, as a condition of receiving NCLB funding, a separate reward and sanctions system for non-Title I schools.

### **Is the State required to make AYP?**

States are NOT part of the school district and school AYP accountability process, but they are required to collect and report state assessment information and distribute in the form of report cards (See Action Brief on Report Cards). States must yield assessment results disaggregated by economically disadvantaged students, special education, limited English proficient students, major racial/ethnic groups, gender\*, and migrant status\*. NCLB requires the US Secretary of Education, beginning with the 2004-2005 school year, to review whether each state has made AYP with respect to each of the subgroups.

\*Note: Scores for the subgroups of gender and migrant status required of the state is NOT required as part of the school and/or school district AYP accountability system.



## Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

*Note: AYP provides a number of major strategic opportunities for community-based organizations to engage the public in discussions of what constitutes academic success or failure, and to commit to assure that ALL schools succeed.*

- Be informed as community leaders about the AYP expectations that apply to your state and local school districts, and help educate the community about the expectations. Make sure AYP expectations and formulas in your states and local community is fair and contains realistic expectations. Make recommendations to your state education department for changes.
- Be proactive. Encourage community discussions about the kinds of resources and the quality of education each school must have in place to meet the AYP expectations before the assessment and testing data are released.
- Conduct an audit and an analysis of each school based on such indicators as:
  - past student assessments;
  - socio-economics status;
  - levels of parental involvement;
  - quality and competency of teachers;
  - special student needs such as health and social service support;
  - instructional interventions such as preschool programs, before- and after-school offerings, tutorials; and,
  - expanded school day and school year opportunities.
- Educate your community about the limitations of using test scores alone to determine the success of individual schools or the school districts. While test scores can be used as “signals” of how schools are measuring up to AYP expectations, test scores have limitations as indicators of school success, and should never be used as the sole determinant of AYP.  
(See Action Brief on Testing)
- Work with your community, parents and school districts in developing additional indicators of school academic success beyond test scores, as recommended by NCLB. For secondary schools, graduation rates MUST be selected as an additional indicator. School districts must select at least one other indicator for elementary schools (indicator can be of their choosing). Many elementary schools are using student attendance as their second indicators. Other indicators could be: socio-economic status of students, per capita student spending, levels of parent involvement, class size, school safety data, and/or other assessments such as achievement tests and teacher-made assessments.
- If a Title I school is identified as NOT meeting the AYP expectations, assure that community members and parents are part of the required school support team that is mandated by law to develop plans for improvement. The community and parents should see the school support team as a critical first step in analyzing the elements that caused a school to be identified as needing improvement.
- For non Title I schools identified as needing improvement, community leaders and parents should be involved in determining what steps for improvement should be undertaken. This provides an opportunity for the community to have a discussion about what constitutes a quality school, what changes should be made toward raising achievement levels, and who should be held accountable for making those changes.
- Hold policy makers and elected officials accountable for providing the sufficient resources necessary to assure that schools are succeeding and making their AYP goals.

### Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

- Provide parents with information about AYP and the consequences AYP may have for their children and school.
- Conduct meetings with parents to discuss the meaning of the AYP results, the state accountability system, and how to understand data to improve school programs, instruction and the resources required for change.
- Be sure that the school communicates information about AYP to parents in a language and a format that they can understand.
- Make sure parents are involved in recommending additional AYP indicators for their school district beyond test scores. Also, require that one of the AYP indicators for the school district to be the level or rate of parental involvement.
- Be proactive. Encourage parents to work with community leaders and citizens in discussing the kinds of resources and the quality of education necessary for a school to meet the AYP expectations.
- Conduct an audit and analyses of each school based on such indicators as:
  - past student assessments;
  - socio-economics status;
  - levels of parental involvement;
  - quality and competency of teachers;
  - special student needs such as health and social service support;
  - instructional interventions such as preschool programs, before- and after-school offerings, tutorials; and,
  - expanded school day and school year opportunities.
- For non-Title I schools identified as needing improvement, parents should work with community leaders in determining what steps for improvement should be undertaken. This provides an opportunity for parents and the community to have a discussion about what constitutes a quality school, what changes should be made toward raising achievement levels, and who should be held accountable for making those changes.
- If a Title I school is identified as NOT meeting the AYP expectations, assure that community members and parents are part of the required school support team that is mandated by law to develop plans for improvement. The community and parents should see the school support team as a critical first step in analyzing the elements that caused a school to be identified as needing improvement.
- Be sure to look at results of AYP scores for individual subgroups within the school.
- Hold policy makers and elected officials accountable for providing the sufficient resources necessary to assure that schools are succeeding and making their AYP goals.



## Resources

- American Federation of Teachers  
<http://www.aft.org/esea/>
- Chief Council of State School Officers  
[http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/MI\\_QA.pdf](http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/MI_QA.pdf)
- Education Commission of the States  
<http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/issue.asp?issueID=195>
- Education Trust  
<http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/rdonlyres/F7F160C3-DE70-4F63-BF0C-2DC47911DA66/0/AYPUnderNCLB.pdf>
- National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing  
<http://www.cse.ucla.edu/products/newsletters/policybrief6.pdf>
- National Education Association  
<http://www.nea.org/esea/eseaayp.html>
- National PTA  
[http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/helpchild/hc\\_gc\\_nochildleftbehind\\_testing](http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/helpchild/hc_gc_nochildleftbehind_testing)
- New York State United Teachers  
[http://www.nysut.org/research/bulletins/2002nclb\\_accountability.html](http://www.nysut.org/research/bulletins/2002nclb_accountability.html)
- US Department of Education  
<http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/nclbguide/parentsguide.html>

### Our Vision

Every day, in every community, *every* child  
in America benefits from a quality public education.

### Our Mission

To build public demand and mobilize resources for  
quality public education for *all* children through a national  
constituency of local education funds and individuals.



Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

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